

2016  
National Park Service  
CENTENNIAL

# Lowell National Historical Park

2015/2016 REPORT

**Connect. Create. Discover.**

*Celebrate 100 Years of the National Park Service*

*Find Your Story at Lowell National Historical Park*





# Connect.

The park's mission is driven by the technical and the inspired: Enabling law, a progressive community, and park staff and partners with individual and collective vision and passion. On the occasion of the National Park Service Centennial in 2016, which offers opportunities to celebrate these key foundations of Lowell National Historical Park, we are embracing community engagement anew.

Below: Interior Secretary Sally Jewell, Congresswoman Niki Tsongas, and Superintendent Celeste Bernardo celebrate Every Kid in a Park with two Junior Rangers



## A Sense of What's Connected

*Every Kid in a Park* (EKIP), a White House initiative, kicked off late in the summer, connecting 4th graders and their families to federal public lands and resources. The park was thrilled to host *Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell* in September as part of Congresswoman *Niki Tsongas'* annual *River Day* events and celebrate EKIP, too. The Secretary heard from youth about their PLAY-LEARN-SERVE-WORK experiences, travelled along the industrial canyon on the Pawtucket Canal, and spoke to 4th grade students and a crowd at Lower Locks about the EKIP program, Land and Water Conservation Fund, and then shared lunch and conversation with park staff.

*Linda Sopheap Sou* joined the park as Chief of Interpretation and Education through an agreement with the Lowell Community Health Center (LCHC) bringing her experience with Lowell's youth, education, and cultural communities.

With community engagement as a targeted outcome of the park's NPS Centennial goals, connecting with new and familiar audiences has taken the shape of a unique series, *Bringing the Park to the People*. Look for the programs throughout this Centennial year in neighborhoods across Lowell.

The park's youth programs establish connections with the community for a wide spectrum of youth, whether participating in Lowell Public School Civics Day or Stoklosa School's walkathon to discover just what that national park in their city is, or exploring career opportunities that the park has to offer at an early age.

## Reaching Out

*Find us on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram* Social media grows as a connector for the park and the community. The *"Behind the Park"* on-line video episodes continued to share insights about the people and places around the park – who knew there were so many! With over 4,000 likes on Facebook, we're excited as this forum expands the park's reach.

In celebration of the NPS Centennial, the *#LowellConnects* series on Facebook has presented links, from the unexpected and unusual, with other national park sites to Lowell National Historical Park. Whether literary, historic, personal, or artistic, we invite you to look back at where the series has already been and where it is headed in the coming months.

Visitor engagement with Lowell's many-layered stories is enhanced with *facilitated dialogue* techniques that staff are putting to use on tours and other encounters. The park has been recognized as a leader in using this technique, presented a webinar for superintendents across the NPS, instructed training sessions, and penned a case study with the *Internal Coalition of Sites of Conscience in an American Association for State and Local History (AASLH)* publication about the use of facilitated dialogue in programs.

Affiliations that expand the traditional reach of the park are connected in sharing the Lowell experience: With *Community Teamwork, Inc.* in presenting a session, "Lowell: City of Immigrants" to their staff; hosting the *GLEAN (The Greater Lowell Evaluation and Advocacy Network)* workshop, a program of the Middlesex County District Attorney; sharing the park's law enforcement mission and a kid-sized Protection vehicle with youth summer events hosted by Lowell neighborhood groups; with *Dance 4 Peace* kicking off the summer at

Boarding House Park as an offering for July's *First Thursday* agenda.

*The City of Lowell* lit up the Merrimack Canal at Lucy Larcom Park via an initiative by *Lowell Heritage Partnership* debuting at WinterFest, allowing attendees to rediscover this historic waterway via the extensive walkway. Look for additional lightings featuring Lower Locks and Swamp Locks to come.

## That's the Ticket!

Opportunities rise for access to park programs. School groups were assisted through the *National Park Foundation Ticket to Ride* grants that provided free transportation to participate in the Tsongas Industrial History Center "River as a Classroom" programs. Throughout the summer of 2015, youth from many Lowell organizations enjoyed the opportunity to "Find Your Park" aboard canal boat tours thanks to a *Call to Action (C2A) grant from Eastern National*. In 2016, another program with partner *Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust* is



"Discovering Pre-colonial Lowell through the Merrimack River." This two-part program was made possible through a transportation grant from the *National Park Foundation* with generous support of DISNEY and individual and foundation donors.

Park staff, volunteers, and family participated in Lowell's *City of Lights Parade*, alongside or aboard the new riverboat and bus, each decked out in their Centennial and holiday finest.

## So Many Choices

When we hear that statement, it is clear that a hit program - or two - or three - is pending. *Kids Week* in February and *PLAYcation* in April prompt calls for reservations with offerings for the local, and wider, community. In February, over 2,500 visitors participated in more than 50 programs offered by 27 partners. Presentations abound, schedules were packed, and youngsters were the beneficiary of so

many offerings we heard comments about having to choose. . . a good challenge to have.

## Every Day is Earth Day

The park joined with an Earth Day collaboration in 2015 brought to Lowell by the Umbrella Arts Center in Concord, with artful mask-making and an exuberant parade around Market Mills. This year, that enthusiasm has grown into a University-led community-wide effort that over 25 organizations organized with a mile-long parade and related events for Lowell Earth Day 2016.



Left, (top to bottom): Rangers join National Night Out; Kicking off Dance 4 Peace

Right, (top to bottom): #Lowell Connects with San Antonio Missions NHP; Earth Day owls on parade



# Create.

The power of places matched with the imagination of a BIG idea caught fire and Lowell became a city of proud collaborators. The creation of this national park is an expression of faith in the future. It reinforces the great innovations that occurred in the 19th century and challenges us to be innovators for the 21st century.

Yum! Folk Festival ethnic food samples

## Blending Preservation and Development

Nearly 98% of 5.3 million square feet of Lowell's mill structures within the historic district have been restored by the end of this year, many applying the historic federal tax credits administered by the National Park Service.

*That's a Lot of Windows!* 477 to be exact. In the park, preservation projects included the first phase of the *replacement windows at the Boott Mills*, with the second phase scheduled for this year, and the third and final phase in 2018. As major changes in Boott Mill #6 are planned to address fire code safety, the *Historic Structure Report* for this expansive facility is being updated.

Around the park, partners are engaged in preservation and development projects with historic structures and settings. The City of Lowell opened *Utopian Park* in the Hamilton Canal District, *Coalition for a Better Acre* purchased the *Smith Baker Center* with yet-to-be announced redevelopment plans, and at the *Rialto Building – historically the B&M Railroad Depot* - in June, *Middlesex Community College* announced launching a \$19 million construction project to create a new performing arts center for its dance and theater students while also recognizing the park's contributions to preserving this unique historic structure.

## Generating Learning Experiences

We were grateful to participate in the *Latino Heritage Internship Program* in the summer sponsored by the *Hispanic Access Foundation*. Intern *Daniela Sierra* engaged with Lowell's Hispanic community, producing a park welcome video that was posted on social media and shared via *Lowell Telecommunications Corporation* Hispanic stations.



*Centennial Volunteer Ambassador Alyck Horton* arrived focused on increasing volunteer engagement and has been immersed in that goal throughout the year: recruiting 400 volunteers for the Lowell Folk Festival, the park's largest single event; promoting the park and volunteer opportunities via cable television; coordinating college clubs and the Canalwater Cleaners for canalway cleanups; activating high school students to assist with Martin Luther King Day of Service projects; and facilitating the park's Centennial planning meetings.

*Public Matters*, through the park's partnership with *The Lowell Plan*, began its 8th program in January. Each year, the program has offered an immersive Lowell leadership experience to about 20 members who live or work in the City. With the 2016 program culminating in June, over 150 members will have participated, growing the network of committed community leaders.

In collaboration with the *University of Massachusetts Lowell (UML)*, students completing their Senior Capstone Project designed *accessible passenger lifts* for the newly installed floating dock at Swamp Locks and fabrication is underway.

The park hosted *"The Journey,"* an open-mike event that focused on stories of immigration, shared by the audience, interspersed with historical context provided by Shamillah Ulysse, a UMASS Lowell student intern.

Last spring, *Middlesex Community College* English Learner students assembled their own pop-up museum to share Lowell's immigration story with attendees at MCC's Spring Fling.

## Community Partnerships

*The University of Massachusetts Lowell Saab-Pedroso Center for Portuguese Culture and Research and Center for Lowell History*, in partnership with the park, shared the community exhibit *"The Lure of the Spindle: The Portuguese in early 20th Century Lowell"* in the Boott Mills. In August, the opening reception included a kick-off with the Holy Ghost Marching Band of Lowell and over 150 attendees, many from Lowell's Portuguese community who shared family photographs, artifacts and stories for the exhibit.

*Lowell Summer Music Series* – Warm summer evenings with music filling the air are Lowell Summer Music Series features. The summer saw a critically acclaimed line-up with Trombone Shorty, Melissa Etheridge, and Lake Street Dive, among others, supported by an amazing run of beautiful weather and fantastic attendance. The tunes continue this June with another blockbuster season forecast for 2016, to include Mary Chapin Carpenter, Dr. Dog, Peter Frampton, and the return of the Indigo Girls.

In 2015, the *Lowell Folk Festival* continued bringing an extensive mix of folk, food, and fun to over one hundred thousand attendees. Festival audiences continue to evolve as many have blocked out the weekend for decades while others newly discover the unique nature of the event. A part of the enjoyment is experiencing Lowell's downtown when the streets are closed to traffic and the area is transformed into performance stages, crafts and food demonstrations, and kids' activities. Things are warming up for the 30th anniversary in 2016,

with King Sunny Ade' & His African Beats (Nigerian juju), Natalie MacMaster & Donnell Leahy (Cape Breton fiddle), and Lurrie Bell's Chicago Blues Band among the confirmed performers. And, do save room for some of the ethnic taste treats available across the Festival!



*Piecing Together a Changing Planet*, a quilt show, artistically expressing the beauty of national parks and challenges of climate change, arrived from Biscayne National Park for a two month stay. Sessions with local community groups as well as a reception featuring a virtual visit by the show's curator and artists shared the depth of these creations with all. The quilts travelled from Lowell to Ellis Island on a continuing tour to NPS sites around the country.



Opposite Page:  
Pop-up Museum by  
MCC students

This Page: (clockwise  
from top left):  
Daniela Sierra and  
friends celebrate flag  
raising of Columbia;  
Lifelike monarchs  
grace a climate change  
quilt; Traditional crafts  
demonstrations at the  
Folk Festival; Youth  
color guard open  
Portuguese exhibit



# Discover.

Whether for the park or the community, forums to discover abound, in the park, throughout Lowell, other national parks and programs, and via educational institutions and community partners. In this Centennial year, we are celebrating opportunities to raise the profile of Lowell National Historical Park.

Below: West Roxbury YMCA visit with Ranger Victor



## Tsongas Industrial History Center – TIHC

The partnership of the park with the *University of Massachusetts Lowell Graduate School of Education* will be in place 25 years in 2016. The partnership has seen several ingenious projects this year, including: developing software for an app for tracking data in the Water Room studio where students study waterpower and build their own canals system during Power to Production programs; *UMass Creative Economy Grant for “Lowell Text”* course applying creative approaches to teaching and learning using the City as a resource; the UML grant for developing the *“Science of Rivers”* program to integrate with TIHC river programs using iSense software; and updates to the interactive components of the River Transformed Exhibit through the *Centennial Challenge grant*.

The TIHC hosted the ninth *National Endowment for the Humanities*-funded teacher workshop, *Inventing America: Lowell and the Industrial Revolution* with 72 teachers scheduled during the two one-week sessions. These educators explore, not only Lowell’s stories for the classroom, but also other national park and notable historical sites in Massachusetts.

With the tens of thousands of students attending TIHC programs annually, the tables are turned on *“Kids Take the Lead”* Day. Students return to the Center with their families to the site of their field trips – sharing their learning experiences and creating new connections.

Tsongas Industrial History Center staff hosted an *Open House at the River Transformed Exhibit* at the Wannalancit Mill. The event provided an opportunity for university and business tenants

in the Wannalancit Mill and nearby area to experience the park exhibit and connect with park staff.

A nascent partnership with *History Unerased* (HUE) was begun last summer, with the park and TIHC hosting two of HUE’s teacher workshops in August. HUE’s mission provides elementary, middle and high school teachers with the knowledge and confidence to teach lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LG-BTQ) history and content. Park and TIHC staff participated in sharing Lowell’s history at the workshops.

*Look for 25th anniversary events pending for TIHC this fall.*

## Stepping Up

Jim Boyle, Khem Nuon, and Francis Ptak, seasonal locktenders at the park, were presented with *Exemplary Act Awards* from the NPS Northeast Region for their courageous response to an assault on a park Protection Ranger in September, 2014

*Maintenance staff* double-down on keeping the park’s resources in top condition throughout the year. *Special projects* keep transportation and other systems running smoothly. This year, with newly re-profiled trucks beneath the trolleys were repainted, serving as shining examples of the constant effort to best serve the public and preserve assets.



## Professionals / Professionals in Training

Opportunities to share Lowell’s experience, offer skills within the wider National Park system, and have staff investigate their career prospects came in many venues through temporary assignments:

### On Temporary Assignment

- *Henry Curletti* as Chief Ranger from Boston NHP
- *Amy Glowacki* to Northeast Region Volunteer & Youth Program Manager
- *Jack Herlihy* as Lowell’s Chief of Cultural Resources
- *Phil Lupsiewicz*, resource sharing with Minute Man NHP
- *Victor Medina* to John Fitzgerald Kennedy NHS
- *Resi Polixa* to Women’s Rights NHP
- *Saoran Ro euth* as Lowell’s Budget Analyst
- *Traci Shorb* as Lowell’s Volunteer and Youth Program Coordinator
- *Craig Thatcher* as Chief Ranger from Cape Cod NS

## Employee Transitions

Some employees moved to new positions, careers, and vocations.

- *David Blackburn* to Hopewell Furnace NHS
- *Chris Briggs* to Boston NHP
- *Christine Bruins*, Planner, from Denver Service Center
- *Dick Cohan*, Grounds Supervisor, retired
- *Matt Collins* to Saratoga NHP
- *Pat Egan*, to Electromotive Equipment Mechanic Supervisor
- *Mike Fernandes*, Grounds Supervisor from Department of Defense
- *Cheryl Jones* to Budget Officer
- *Emily Levine* to Golden Gate NRA
- *Leilani Markland*, Business Center Supervisor from Veterans Administration

- *Bill Moretti* to Veterans Administration
- *Francis Ptak*, Custodial Work Leader from Lock Tender
- *Diana Shiba* to Administrative Officer
- *Linda Sou*, Chief of Interpretation and Education from Lowell Community Health Center
- *Seth Toensing* to US Department of State
- *Charles Tonetti*, Architect from Independence NHP

## Engaged Volunteers and Youth

We love our volunteers and youth employees! *Thank you* for the contributions each of you have made throughout the year and years! Volunteers have stepped up in numerous roles, with both the park and individuals mutually receiving benefits.

*Lowell High ROTC* students came together for a clean-up to fulfill service requirements and while filling over 40 bags of leaves and debris, they discovered Kerouac Park and one of Lowell’s literary native sons. In return, the public now enjoys a spruced-up park setting in downtown along the Eastern Canal.

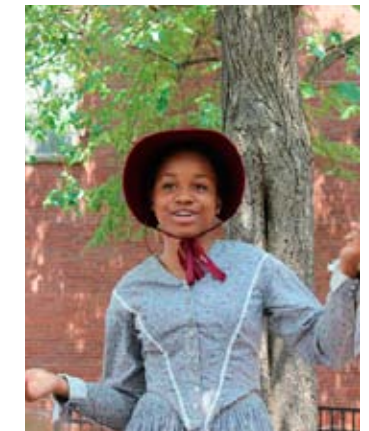
In October, 60 employees from *Enel Greenpower’s* local office volunteered their assistance with a cleanup at several park sites. Their teams spread out across the city by boat, aboard a trolley, and on foot, participating in projects exploring the historic canals carrying the water with which Enel harnesses power.

*The Lowell Canalwaters Cleaners* conduct periodic cleanups, instilling a sense pride to the improved appearance of these downtown waterways.

Volunteers assist routinely with front-line visitor services at the Boott Cotton Mills Museum and Visitor Center. Please say hello if you see them on duty.

The cadre of youth employees through *Spindle City Corps* – a partnership program with *Community Teamwork, Inc.* – contributes in several areas: the *Maintenance Team* can be found throughout downtown on facility and park projects and before and during Lowell Folk Festival assisting with set up, recycling, and take-down; the *Theater - Community Action Team (CAT)* presented historic vignettes, assisted with the hands on activities during kids shows at Boarding House Park, and shared park information with attendees at other public events; and the *Preservation Trade Skills* members discover new abilities throughout the year, with hands-on experience in utilities, woodworking, and painting while assisting with park projects and maintenance.

In 2015, *Cultural Resource Diversity Intern Daniel Hernandez* researched the park’s collection for the Pawtucket Dam, inventoried papers from former park managers, organized files, and created a guide to the content and research prepared for a “management and capital” exhibit. Daniel presented a session on the materials available from this exhibit’s development for park staff.



Left: Canalway cleanup by Enel Greenpower employees

Right: Mill girl stories from Community Action Team (CAT) youth





**Top:** Memory Box performance  
by Flying Orb Productions

**Bottom:** Counting House Lofts  
at Hamilton Canal District



## 2016 Community Awards

The Lowell Heritage Partnership and Lowell National Historical Park join together to acknowledge contributions for cultural heritage and historic preservation in Lowell. Enlightening nominations made award selections challenging. This year's recipients recognize an impressive array of long-term and recent accomplishments.

### Leadership in Cultural Heritage

**Martha Mayo:** For over forty years as special collections librarian at the University of Massachusetts Lowell with an emphasis on Lowell's history and as a partner to many at the Center for Lowell History since 1989. Martha is also recognized for her civic contributions to the Lowell Historical Society, Lowell Historic Board, Brush Art Gallery, and Lowell Heritage Partnership.



### Excellence in Cultural Heritage

**Richard Howe, Jr. for Lowell Walks:** Beginning in 2015, the Lowell Walks series experienced tremendous participation in its inaugural year. Each walk weaves a new narrative about the city's dynamic past, present, and future and is told by local specialists at locations that convey the stories best. Audiences regularly exceeded one hundred as word spread of these distinctive offerings. Lowell Walks is underway for its second season in 2016.



**Asian American Cultures Festival:** The Center for Asian American Studies at the University of Massachusetts Lowell partnered with Flying Orb Productions, Angkor Dance Troupe, UMass Lowell Music Department, and the Lowell Cultural Council to present the Asian American Cultures Festival. The 2015 and 2016 programs brought the Cambodian traditions of live music together with dance performances, incorporated film, and the expressive stories took center stage at the multi-media programs of "Kingdom of Kambuja" and "Memory Box."

### Excellence in Historic Preservation

**Winn Companies for Counting House Lofts:** Rehabilitating 102,000 square feet of the Hamilton Manufacturing Company's Storehouse and Countinghouse along Jackson Street, Winn Companies created fifty-two residential units. Winn Companies has successfully completed several other Lowell mill-to-residence projects including The Apartments at Boott Mills, Boott Mills West, and Loft27. These projects each blend the historic industrial aesthetic with contemporary residential amenities.

**Design** Higgins & Ross

#### Photography

Front cover: James Higgins

Back cover (clockwise from top left): Paula Em, Higgins & Ross;

Mayo photo courtesy of Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust;

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